



MEDIA RELEASE

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Take Safety to the Street this Halloween

Halloween is one of the most thrilling nights of the year for children, and also one of the most dangerous. As kids hit the street to trick-or-treat, the potential for unintentional injury rises. In fact, children are four times more likely to be hit by a car on Halloween than any other night of the year. Halloween can indeed be scary, with increases in pedestrian injuries, burns and falls among children.

Pedestrian Injuries

Halloween is the most dangerous night of the year for child pedestrians. Darting out into the street is one of the most common causes of pedestrian death among children. As children scurry from house to house collecting treats, it is important for them to take the following precautions:

- Decorate costumes, bags and sacks with reflective tape and stickers.
- Use costumes that are light or bright enough to make children more visible at night.

Traffic

- Teach children to walk, not run, while trick-or-treating.
- Remind children to stop at all street corners before crossing. Tell them to cross streets only at intersections and crosswalks.
- Teach them to look left, right and left again before crossing the street and to continue looking both ways as they cross.
- Teach them never to dart out into a street or cross between parked cars.
- Never let children under age 12 go trick-or-treating or cross the street without adult supervision.

Motorists

- Slow down in residential neighborhoods.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Watch for children walking in the street or on medians and curbs.
- Enter and exit driveways and alleyways slowly and carefully.
- Teach children to exit and enter the car on the curbside, away from traffic.

For kids ages 12 and under:

- Adults should accompany children under age 12 on their trick-or-treat rounds.
- Attach the name, address and phone number (including area code) of children under age 12 to their clothes in case they get separated from adults.

For kids ages 12 and older:

- Teach your child his or her phone number.
- Instruct children to travel only in familiar areas and along a pre-established route.
- Instruct children never to enter a home or an apartment building unless accompanied by an adult.
- Set a time for children to return home.
- Restrict trick-or-treating visits to homes with porch or outside lights illuminated.
- Tell children to bring their treats home before eating them. Parents should check treats to ensure that items have not been tampered with and are safely sealed. Be careful with fruit. Inspect the surface closely for punctures/holes and cut it open before allowing a child to eat it.

All ages:

- Remove breakable items or obstacles such as tools, ladders and children's toys from your steps, lawn and porch. Keep jack-o'-lanterns lit with candles away from landings or doorsteps where costumes might brush against the flame.

On Halloween night, cumbersome costumes and blinding masks can make walking safely through dark neighborhoods difficult. The following tips can help prevent fall-related injuries:

- Apply face paint or cosmetics directly to the face. It is safer than a loose-fitting mask that can obstruct a child's vision. If a mask is worn, be certain it fits securely. Cut the eyeholes large enough for full vision.
- Give trick-or-treaters flashlights.
- Make costumes short enough to avoid tripping.
- Secure hats and wigs so they will not slip over children's eyes.
- Dress children in shoes that fit.
- Allow children to carry only flexible knives, swords or other props. Anything they carry could injure them if they fall.
- Teach children not to cut across yards. Lawn ornaments and clotheslines are "hidden hazards" in the dark. Tell your children to stay on the sidewalk at all times.

Fires and burns are the third leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children.

- Look for "flame resistant" labels on costumes, masks, beards and wigs.
- Use fire resistant material when making costumes.
- Avoid costumes made of flimsy material and outfits with big, baggy sleeves or billowing skirts. These are more likely to come in contact with an exposed flame, such as a candle, than tighter fitting costumes.
- Keep candles, pumpkins with candles, matches and lighters out of children's reach.

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